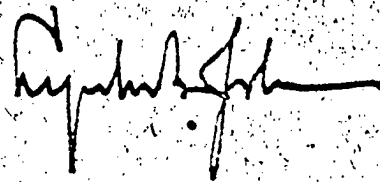


JUL 27 1965

"... I hope that others who feel as you do may be willing to join in this expression."



From President Johnson's letter to Freedom House

THE SILENT CENTER MUST SPEAK UP!

The defense of our Government's efforts in South Vietnam should not be left solely to the President or to officials of the Administration. The critics of the President have had the field to themselves. This monologue is a disservice to the American people. The great majority of our people have been silent too long; their voices must now be heard.

The distorted picture of American public opinion given by the critics has undoubtedly affected the decisions of the Communist rulers in Hanoi and Peking. Few of these rulers have ever visited western countries; they do not realize that the strength of the small *ad hoc* groups calling for American withdrawal from Vietnam is grossly exaggerated. This misunderstanding has impeded the Administration's effort to achieve a durable peace. The notion that the American people are gravely divided against their leaders has helped to create the illusion that in the end the U. S. would capitulate to the aggressor.

It is not surprising that a recent full-page advertisement, signed by several hundred "artists" and seeking to persuade the country to abandon the defense of South Vietnam, included the names of avowed Communists—men whose articles have appeared in the Communist *Worker* and whose books are official Communist publications. But more noteworthy is the long list of those others who are not Communists and have nevertheless added their signatures; believing they are striking a blow for "peace," they have allowed themselves to become parties to an insidious propaganda campaign.

One of the many things the advertisement forgot to mention is that both Peking and Moscow have rejected all appeals for negotiation by our President, by United Nations Secretary General U Thant, by the mediation committee of the 17 non-aligned Afro-Asian nations, and others.

We believe most Americans know that if aggression against South Vietnam—disguised as a "war of liberation"—is not successfully resisted, more aggression and perhaps even larger-scale war will follow. That is the lesson of Ethiopia. That is the lesson of Munich.

We believe that at this moment of peril and challenge the American people would like to see their real voices proclaimed in a forthright declaration of national unity. This is why Freedom House offers the following Credo of Support for our national purpose in Vietnam.

1. Our withdrawal from Vietnam under present circumstances cannot be sustained on moral grounds. Such a decision would be morally indefensible. Having freely accepted responsibility as a world power and a champion of freedom, the United States would dishonor that role by defaulting on its promises and commitments. Such default would not only abandon men, women and children to cruel reprisals; it would seriously undermine the credibility of our commitments to other nations.

2. The decision to halt Communist aggression—whether in Vietnam, Laos or the Congo—is clearly in the interest of the United States and the other nations of the free world.

3. We welcome the recognition of a common interest which has prompted Australia, New Zealand and South Korea to take an active part in the present struggle. We hope other allies will join in the defense of free world areas threatened by Communist "wars of national liberation."

4. The United States is not embarked on a military crusade against Communist nations. Our record in dealing with the Iron Curtain nations of Europe and living peaceably with their Communist-controlled societies is our credential.

5. It is equally important to recognize that our military effort is only part of the substantial U. S. program to enlarge the economic, social and political future of the Vietnamese people.

6. We regret the world is still racked by force rather than run by reason. But we also see no hope for reason until the force of lawlessness is checked. Our troops and arms are not mere engines of destruction; they are instruments of prevention. We mean to use them as judiciously as possible. But we do mean to use them effectively.

There is nothing new in what we confront today, either in the challenge from the aggressor or in the timid voices that would yield. Nor is there any blinking the fact that the necessary responses are both difficult and dangerous. The very nature of the great challenges we as a nation must face requires not only wise decisions but prompt and effective action. We believe the present policy of the United States meets these tests and deserves the whole-hearted support of the American people.

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